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PPB-70-1553

23 July 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with [ ] NSA  
on ARPA Funding of an Experimental Project  
for Community Information Handling

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1. I met with [ ] NSA, [ ]  
at 10 this morning at his request to discuss the [ ] proposal  
for ARPA funding of a new Community Information Handling System  
(initial draft attached, attachment A).

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2. [ ] said he wished to discuss this idea with me  
inasmuch as [ ] (CRS, CIA COINS Subsystem Manager)  
was on leave, and I conclude from this that [ ] is expecting  
to carry the [ ] proposal forward in the COINS environment.

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3. [ ] brought with him a "Work Statement" (attachment B)  
and an "Implementation Plan and Schedule" (attachment C). We did not  
discuss the content of either paper. I simply accepted them saying  
I would be interested in looking them over, and that if I had any comments  
on them I would convey them to him later. I added that I knew from  
discussion at the Information Handling Committee yesterday that there  
was general agreement that the idea contained in the initial [ ]  
draft warranted study; that in other words, we should proceed with the  
"Phase O" study and that [ ] planned to so inform [ ]

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4. [ ] said that [ ] (he is working most closely  
with [ ] on this) would be  
conducting the study set forth in the work statement within the next  
two months, i.e., to be completed by the end of September.

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The purpose [REDACTED] said, of his visit was: first, to ensure that [REDACTED] personnel working on the study would have access to what they might need in the Agency; and second, to get any suggestions we might have on substantive areas in addition to "Sino-Soviet Strategic Weapons Systems" that might be examined as initial data bases for the "system".

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5. On the first point, access for [REDACTED] personnel, I assured [REDACTED] that there would be no problem provided clearances were adequate and in order, that CIA's doors were open, and we would cooperate in every way we could in the study process. I suggested that he put the [REDACTED] people in touch with me, and that they be instructed to look to me for assistance and guidance, and that they work through me on the Agency part of the study.

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6. On the second objective, ideas on "substantive areas" we had a long "discussion"--mostly a lecture from me on the desirability of starting modestly, perhaps not trying to take even three subject areas and may be even reducing the "Sino-Soviet Strategic Weapons Systems" to a smaller subset like, for instance, Soviet land-based strategic weaponry. I pointed out that in a sense "strategic weaponry" was a good place to start because this was a matter of numbers, types, and locations of "things" hence easy to machine, call up, display or what have you. But I added that he well knew this data was already in machine form here, at NPIC, at SAC, and probably any number of places so what was the problem. He could only say that we all have common problems so it would be well to have a common system with computers, common query languages and a common data base. I took issue with this saying we might personally have common concerns, but we don't have common problems in the Community. For this reason, we don't all do the same things even with the same data; that is why all our systems are different, and as far as I could see that's the way it should be.

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7. I urged [REDACTED] before he dropped a new contract on [REDACTED] to formulate in his mind and define precisely what it was he wanted to accomplish. I said if I were [REDACTED] I would not accept a contract that did not state unambiguously the purpose and objective to be accomplished. I said I did not understand what this "system" and any data in it would be used for. Would it be for just quick reference in response to spot questions?

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No, he said, it should have "computational algorithms" and graphic display capabilities as well. What for? and for whom? For management information and analysis by those working in "these areas". He went on to say he has been interested in trying to find out why some files were used in COINS and not others--what are the characteristics of the files that are useful and why is it that only some NSA people use even these, not the whole Community. He was going to publish a study on this soon!

8. I told [ ] I thought it not difficult to determine what general files are useful... that this would not require any big consumer survey. Indeed it was my own conviction that the FININTEL subset of the AEGIS file would be of great and general utility to the Community. It was because I felt this was so that I had pressed forward to bring it into the COINS environment. (He thought State had prompted this.) I said we had a few other files, some already in machine form, that would very likely be of Community interest, perhaps even on-line, although I thought the on-line feature unnecessary in most cases and of very limited applicability. I pointed out that information in these files was already available to the Community and had long been so, some periodically published, e.g., Soviet aid and trade statistics, and in any case continually available to those in the Community whose job depended on such information and who therefore knew what questions to ask of whom. This led to a discussion of ASPIN's information center concept, of the indispensibility of manual operations--e.g., specifically in the biographic area--of the desirability of having those who build and maintain files access them--all of which argued against on-line remote access.

[ ] for what it is worth, agreed, launching into a discussion of the smooth, effective workings of "CRef" (NSA's Central Reference Service which, be it noted, is almost entirely a manual operation, as it should be).

9. Back to "Phase Zero" and the [ ] Study, [ ] said the idea was for [ ] to look into the whole Community to find out what is going on in a specific substantive or geographic area (Middle East perhaps) which he hoped would lead to some concept of what we can do given "common problems, using common technology" thus to decide whether or not there is a "common requirement".

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At that point (he thinks end of September), we take a look at the "results" and decide. If there is not a "common requirement," scrub it. If there is a "common requirement," say so and get authorization to proceed with the solution. This will involve commitment of resources from each Agency. (He said they dropped the "30 people from each" idea because it was raising too much of a fuss.) I confessed an inability to grasp these generalities, but that it did seem he was at last starting at the beginning and that was a plus. ("Phase Zero" seems an appropriate name, and I'm glad it is ARPA's money and that it does not commit us to anything.)

10. I again assured [redacted] of our willingness to cooperate

11. It was a pleasant chat devoid of any suggestion of reluctance on our part to cooperate. On the contrary, [redacted] can only think us eager to cooperate as I think we must for the first phase.

12. Other things I "learned":

a. Mr. Charles Joyce, EOB staffer, is not in this act.

b. [redacted] plans to extend [redacted] COINS contract beyond mid August at which time [redacted] will report on 7 - 10 alternative configurations for COINS with technical consequences of each, cost analyses and time schedules for implementation. Out of these, two or three recommended alternatives will be selected and a detailed systems analysis will ensue. (It seems to be [redacted] has some kind of syphon that can go on forever.) Subsequent work orders for Informatics will include:

(1) A look at the executive and operating systems in each computer in the COINS net (by January 1971).

(2) Study how to get potential Community COINS "users" informed, trained, and motivated.

(3) Conduct two more controlled "tests" of COINS, October 1970 and January 1971.

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c. Admiral Gaylor has sent on 22 July 1970 a letter to Mr. Helms saying CIA should be "ordered" to come up in COINS eight hours a day. Do this by "fiat". NSA has no problems with compartmentation--has never had any spillage, and he (Admiral Gaylor) does not understand what the matter is with CIA. [ ] dropped this gem off as a parting shot. I told him to cut it out. This was most unhelpful. Our problems, I said, are not with compartmentation in a multi-level of clarification. They have to do with sensitive data of a counterintelligence and personnel security sort which cannot be run concurrently with files accessible by the whole Community. As he well knew, we were seeking some way to come into COINS full time with machines already full without sacrificing some of the processing we must do and without undergoing the cost of adding another machine dedicated exclusively to COINS. It was not a simple problem and cannot be solved by simple fiat. I thought this most meddlesome. He denied responsibility which I am safe in assuming was a bald lie.)

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[ ]  
Assistant Director for Information Processing  
Office of Planning, Programming, and Budgeting

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Attachments:  
As stated

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